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Dear Members of the Committee,

I am a practicing cardiologist in Bangor and a board member of a physician group, the National Physicians Alliance, that advocates for patient's interest and the restoration of integrity in medicine.

I am writing today to urge you to support LD 1183, "An Act To Prevent Predatory Marketing Practices against Minors Regarding Data Concerning Health Care Issues".

Children are the most vulnerable members of our society and they are increasingly exposed to marketing not only through "conventional" media such as television, but also through "social" electronic media such as Facebook, Twitter and similar vehicles. Through conventional media, *predatory marketing* to children has been recognized for a long time. Much of it has focused on marketing of alcohol, tobacco products and junk-food. Until recently I was not aware that these media are used to market medical products to children, but as I have become a user of facebook, I am amazed to learn that this site can deliver ads with clinical precision¹, and can specifically target high school students (see Figures 1 and 2).

In the United States, many medications that in the past were requiring prescriptions are available over the counter (OTC), and can be purchased by teenagers without much effort. However side effects are not negligible, as OTC

¹ Stan Schroeder, "Facebook's Clinically Precise Advertising", Mashable – The Social Media Guide, <http://mashable.com/2009/03/12/facebook-radius-advertising/>, accessed 4/3/2009

drugs can have lethal effects even when applied by adults². The law requires that in general, a parents or guardian's consent is required for medical treatment. Permitting predatory marketing of medical treatments to children fundamentally undermines this concept, and the parents should not have to rely upon voluntary self-policing by the industry.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "B Schaefer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first letter "B" is large and loops around. The last name "Schaefer" is written in a more standard cursive script.

Dr. Benjamin Schaefer

² Natalie Singer, "Couple face charges in 6-month-old son's death", Seattle Times, 3/17/07, http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2003622512_overdose17m.html, accessed 4/4/2009

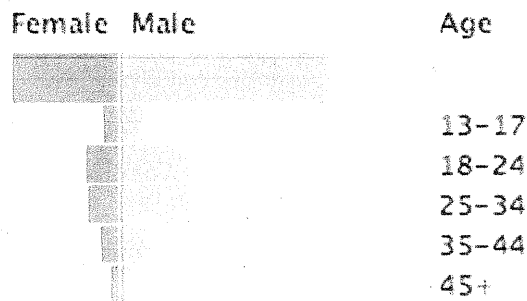


Figure 1 Age distribution of facebook users.

Source: <http://www.facebook.com/advertising/>

2. Targeting

Location: ☒ United States ☐ Everywhere ☐ By State/Province ☐ By City

Age: -

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Keywords:

Education: ☒ All ☐ College Grad ☐ In College ☐ In High School

Workplaces:

Relationship: ☐ Single ☐ In a Relationship ☐ Engaged ☐ Married

Interested In: ☐ Men ☐ Women

Languages: ☒ Spanish

Approximate reach: 1,081,820

I want to reach people in the United States who speak Spanish.

Figure 2 Targeting facebook advertising

Source: see footnote 1